

Dear Parents,

It's time for the incoming 7th and 8th grade students to select their electives for the 2016-17 school year. I have already met with all of the students to review elective choices, Spanish, and the selection process. To keep you informed, the following information was shared with the students this week:

To select electives for the 2016-2017 school year, **STUDENTS** follow these simple steps:

1. Visit my.marinerscs.org
2. Select the "Sign Up for Electives Here!" link in the top of the page.
3. To review the elective options, select the "2016-17 Elective Descriptions".
4. To register for electives, select "7th-8th Elective Sign Up Form." Students must be logged in to their **STUDENT** google account to access the form. They will then be prompted to follow the detailed instructions to complete the form.
5. The deadline to submit the form is Friday, May 20th. Important Note: Late submittals will not be accepted. Students who do not submit the form by the deadline will forego the opportunity to choose their electives.
6. Students can resubmit the form if they have changed their minds about their original selections. We will refer to the latest form submitted when placing students in electives.
7. Spanish: please read the information below. Unless specified by a parent, all students must enroll in a Spanish course. See the elective selection form for information regarding verification process.

I also want to take this opportunity to provide important information regarding Spanish. It is our hope that all students enroll in Spanish. Not only is it great preparation for high school, but it is a relevant and enriching educational experience. We are excited to expand our Spanish program next year by offering an additional option to both 7th and 8th grade students! 7th and 8th grade Spanish participants can now choose between two course opportunities, a classroom Spanish course or online Spanish course, based upon what best suits their interest and need. The curriculum presented in both courses is aligned ensuring a student can successfully participate in either course. Content, curriculum, and pacing are identical with the intention of completing Spanish I by the end of the 8th grade year. Spanish course offerings include:

Classroom Spanish Course: Traditional instructional model with class attendance two days per week led by a Spanish teacher. This is the middle school course that has always been offered.

Online Spanish Course: In the fall of 2015, MCS launched a pilot online 7th grade Spanish course. Due to the success of the program, we are expanding online offerings next year. This will include online courses for both 7th and 8th grade Spanish. The online course will be taught by a MCS Spanish teacher and conducted through Schoology. Before enrolling in the online Spanish class, it is important to understand all of the following pertinent information.

What are the reasons to enroll in an online Spanish course?

The primary reason parents and students are interested in an online course is for greater flexibility and availability in the student's schedule. For example, a student may desire to be in band or orchestra and Spanish but also want to take advantage of an additional elective. Others may be enrolled in ASB and must then choose between Spanish or another elective. By providing an online Spanish course, students can have Spanish **and** participate in **two** electives each semester. It provides additional elective opportunities and choice.

The second reason for interest is due to the enjoyment of the online experience. For some students, the online course suits their learning style by providing a more independent and individualized learning opportunity.

What additional considerations or impacts should be understood to make the most informed decision?

It is imperative that the student and parent understand the course, in its entirety, is completed independently, online through Schoology. No advisory period or class time is provided during the school day as it is with the traditional classroom experience. Students enrolled in the online course are responsible for completing the course outside of school hours.

Secondly, participation should be taken into careful consideration due to the increased demand it will place on a student's schedule. Students taking online Spanish will continue to have a full schedule during the school day and are not exempt from participation in any other class. As such, the online course increases the students' academic and course load.

Thirdly, this course is assessed as a letter grade not a Pass/Fail mark. It would therefore impact a student's GPA. A letter grade must be indicated on transcripts sent to high schools in order for students to enter Spanish II as a freshman.

How is the course designed and what is the expectation for completion?

The course is designed in weekly sections beginning Sunday night and ending Thursday night. All course work must be completed by the end of the day Thursday. Completion necessitates individual responsibility and independence as late work is not accepted. Students can anticipate approximately 2-3 hours of online course work per week.

Spanish Support is offered once a week (day to be determined) by the MCS teacher. This occurs before school to provide necessary assistance for greater success. Attendance is optional depending on student need.

Please take a moment to peruse all of the awesome elective offerings provided next year. Elective offerings, some new and some returning, are aimed at providing innovative enrichments that allow students to explore a variety of interests and passions. We believe the elective program is a distinctive element of the middle school program!

In Him,

Heather Harrison

Middle School Principal